

CONTENTS

SUMMARY	4
1 INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 Project origins	5
2 METHODOLOGY	5
2.1 Project design	5
2.2 Desk-based assessment	6
2.3 Archive	7
2.4 Walk-over survey	7
3 BACKGROUND	7
3.1 Location, topography and geology	7
4 HISTORICAL CONTEXT	7
4.1 Historical background	7
5 SURVEY RESULTS	10
5.1 Methodology	10
5.2 Ground floor internal lay-out	11
5.3 Upper floor internal lay-out	14
5.4 Eastern elevation	17
5.5 Southern elevation	19
5.6 Northern elevation	23
5.7 Western elevation	24
6 DISCUSSION	25
6.1 Academic merit	25
6.2 Phasing	25
6.3 Discussion	26
7 ARCHIVE	28
8 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	28
9 BIBLIOGRAPHY	29

FIGURES

Figure 1	Location of survey	5
Figure 2	Location of study building	6
Figure 3	Donald map of 1774	8
Figure 4	Tithe map of 1840 showing the study building	9
Figure 5	Location of the study building on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map 1868	10
Figure 6	Floor plan of stone barn	11
Figure 7	Interior of the Barn	12
Figure 8	Interior of the barn with partition wall	12
Figure 9	Interior of stable	12
Figure 10	Cupboard (18)	12
Figure 11	Store interior	13
Figure 12	Cupboard (19)	13
Figure 13	Stone plinth within the bothy	14
Figure 14	Dormitory above the store	14
Figure 15	Floor plan of the upper storey	14
Figure 16	Popular motifs found on the plastered walls	14
Figure 17	Western panel bearing graffiti	15
Figure 18	Filled window within bothy	17
Figure 19	Steps leading into the bothy	17
Figure 20	Eastern elevation of stone barn	18
Figure 21	Steps (12) into the bothy	18
Figure 22	Window (13)	18
Figure 23	Southern elevation of the barn	19
Figure 24	Western end of southern elevation	19
Figure 25	Central area of southern elevation	19
Figure 26	Eastern end of southern elevation	20

Figure 27	Door (1)	20
Figure 28	Window (2)	21
Figure 29	Window (5)	21
Figure 30	Steps (6)	21
Figure 31	Window (7)	21
Figure 32	Loft door (8)	21
Figure 33	Door (9)	21
Figure 34	Former window now a dovecote (10)	22
Figure 35	Interior of former window now a dovecote (10)	22
Figure 36	Window (11)	22
Figure 37	Door (3)	22
Figure 38	Northern elevation of stone barn	23
Figure 39	Eastern end of the northern elevation	23
Figure 40	Central part of the northern elevation	23
Figure 41	Western ends of the northern elevation	23
Figure 42	Door (15)	24
Figure 43	Door (16)	24
Figure 44	Window (17)	24
Figure 45	Western gable end	24
Figure 46	Western elevation	25
Figure 47	Phase plan of the barn complex	26
Appendix A		
	South elevation	30
Appendix B		
	North elevation	31

SUMMARY

The surveyed barn at Rushgill House, Skelton comprised of four principal units: a threshing barn, stable, store and bothy. The barn was architecturally unremarkable constructed from local red sandstone and displaying few architectural embellishments that characterised vernacular style and consequently period.

Based on map regression, the extant building appears to be similar in plan to the structure recorded on the 1840 tithe map. Graffiti within one of the room suggests that the building was in use by 1814. The purpose of this graffiti is unclear but may have served a religious or educational purpose.

Although the barn is plain, its close association with a farmhouse built in 1731 and the unusual survival of graffiti suggests that there is potential for further research into rural social history at the advent of the Industrial Age.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project origins

The proposed scheme of improvement advocated by the client has the potential to affect the character and appearance of a building of special architectural and historic interest. Renovation will affect the character and appearance of the building and as a result, a programme of archaeological building recording has been initiated by the contractor prior to the amendments taking place.

In order to ascertain the historical and archaeological merits of the study building affected by this development, the contractor investigated known historical records through a rapid desk-based assessment and the survival of extant buildings via a programme of building recording equivalent to Level 2 as described by English Heritage: *Understanding Historic Buildings A Guide to Good Recording Practice*, 2006.

The study building was located at NY 40550 38525 and is part of planning application 10/0729, an extension to planning application 7/0716.

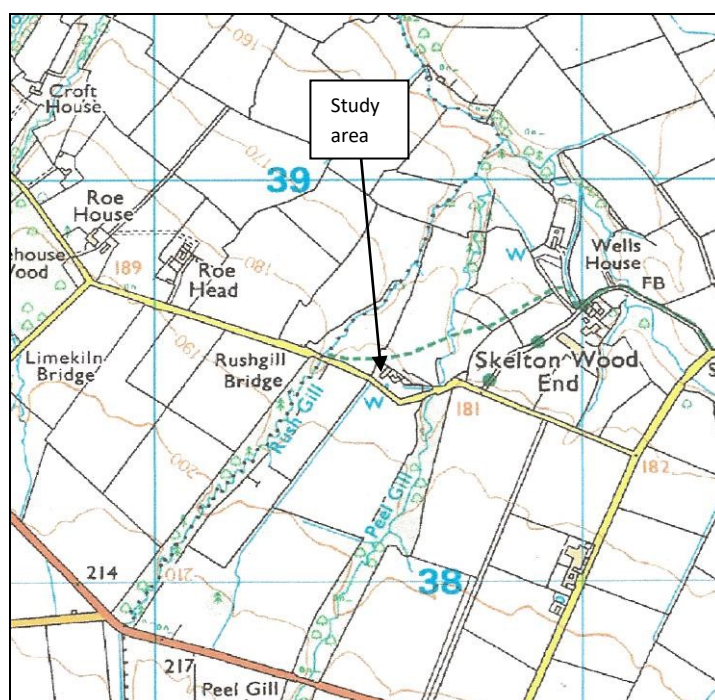


Figure 1. Location of survey. (OS copyright licence no. 100044205).

The desk-based assessment included visits to Carlisle Library and Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle. The objective of this exercise was to collate sufficient detail to identify the issues and potential for academic research and provide a historical context for targeted archaeological enquiry.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Project Design

Gerry Martin Associates Ltd proposed a project design for the archaeological recording of an extant barn. This proposal outlined the contractors' professional suitability, a brief historical summary of the

study area, general objectives required of the project, the methodology and the resources needed for the successful implementation of this work.

Gerry Martin Associates Ltd was commissioned to undertake the desk-based assessment and an archaeological building survey by the client Mr Patrick Donoghue.

The following report has been assembled to the relevant standards and protocols of the Institute of Archaeologists, combined with accepted best practice and in accordance with the brief prepared by the client.

Fieldwork took place on July 22nd 2013.

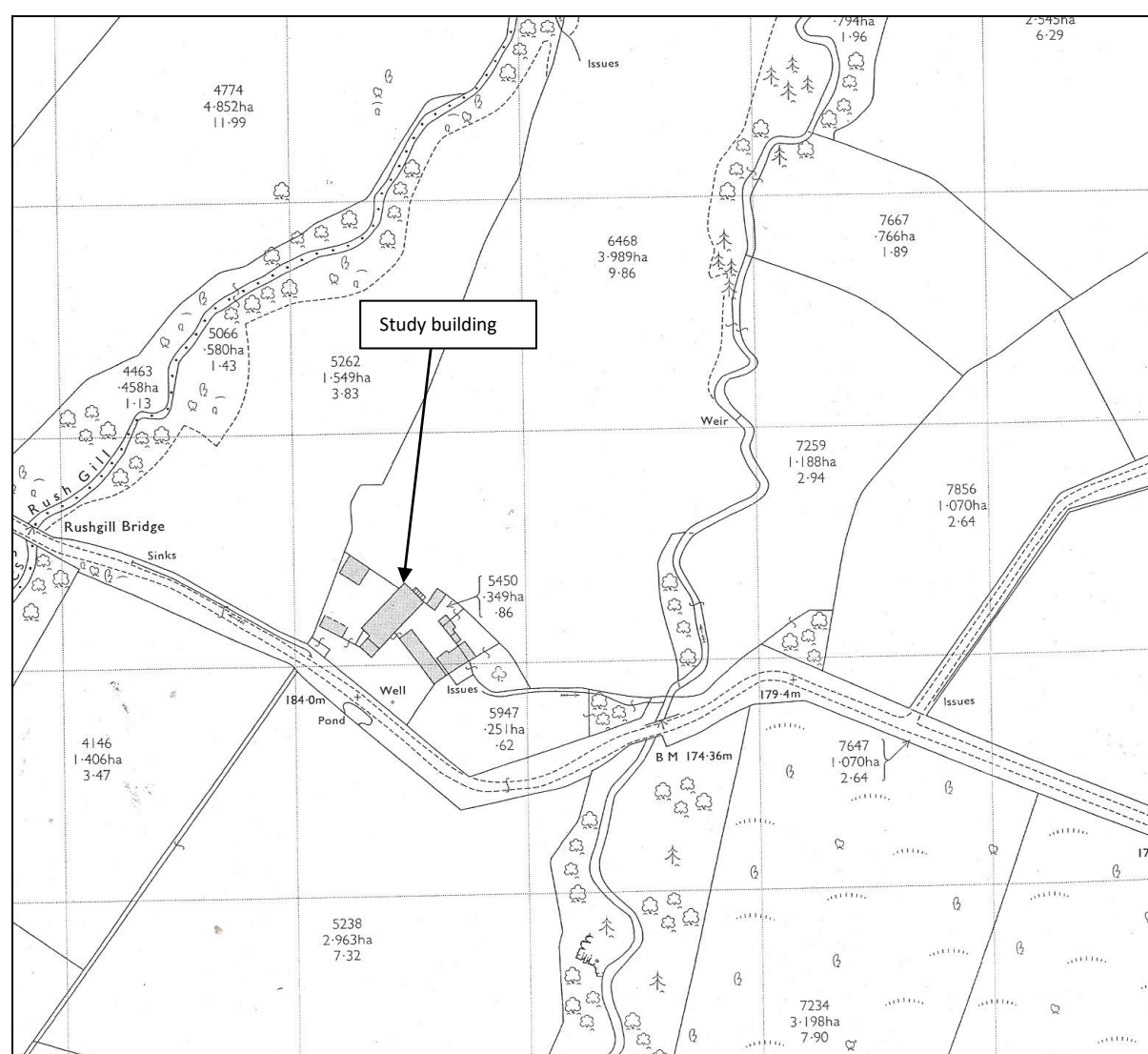


Figure 2. Location of study building (OS copyright licence no. 100044205).

2.2 Desk-based assessment

In accordance with the Brief, the rapid desk-based assessment investigated primary and secondary historical sources, maps and other literature in order to set the survey results into their past cultural, historical and topographic context.

The desk-based assessment comprised a search of three primary archival repositories.

- Carlisle Library provided sources for published works including newspaper articles, archaeological and antiquarian reports, photographs and journals.
- Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle was sought for details of landowners, occupiers and cartographic evidence.
- The Historic Environment Record, online, provided the Sites and Monuments Record describing previous archaeological reconnaissance and through electronic media showing the spatial distribution of these discoveries.

2.3 Archive

The archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design and the guidelines set out by English Heritage (1991) and the Institute of Archaeologists (1994, 2007 and 2008).

The archive will be deposited with an appropriate repository, Tullie House, Carlisle and two copies of the report donated to the County Sites and Monuments Record, as is standard practice in Cumbria.

2.4 Walk-over survey

A walkover of the study area on July 22nd 2013 did not suggest any upstanding monuments such as derelict buildings, walls or tofts existed. A lean-to had been removed as had a number of small, casual and modern structures that appear on the 1971 Ordnance survey map (figure 2).

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Location, topography and geology

The study area lies south of the hamlet of Sowerby Row, just within the parish of Skelton, on the north-eastern fringes of the Lake District National Park.

The study area lies at a height of approximately 181.00m OD within an area noted for pasture, between becks Rush Gill and Peel Gill.

The drift geology comprises pink Boulder Clay and yellow sands, the outwash from glacial activity between 2,000,000 and 10,000 years ago.

Solid geology is formed from Old Red Sandstone.

4 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

4.1 Historical background

Within a sub-rectangular plan property resides the study building (NY 40550 38525), the disposition of the land falling towards the north. The original stone farmhouse has an interior date-stone proclaiming construction in 1731; various architectural devices appear to confirm this assertion.

The listed building schedule undertaken on the 24th October 1986 describes the adjacent building (Entry Number 1145465) as the following:

Farmhouse. Early C18. Pink sandstone rubble walls with V-jointed calciferous sandstone quoins and eaves cornice. Graduated greenslate roof, the bottom course of red sandstone slates; rebuilt brick chimney stack. 2 storeys, 5 bays. Front has 2-light flat stone-mullioned windows; the end windows on both floors are firewindows. Rear irregular C19 outshot. Interior has ground-floor inglenooks at either end with stone heck posts and beamed ceilings. Adjoining barn dated 1902 is not of interest.

The site is occupied by Rushgill Farm and a suite of former agricultural buildings listed as HER 19985. No other archaeological monument or find spot was listed in the Historic Environment Record within a radius of 500 metres.

It has been speculated that the road on which Sowerby Row takes its name was part of a wider spatial organisation belonging to a system of Roman centuriation, being 2 x 20 *actus* west of a parallel Roman road at Skelton (Richardson 1986, 73-75). Although this assertion cannot be disproved, it would appear that the direction of natural drainage and topography probably had a far greater impact upon settlement patterns (Martin 2012, 7).

The 1774 Donald map appears to show the study area as the last speck at the end of the no-through road from Sowerby Row.



Figure 3. Donald map of 1774

The remoteness of the area appears to have encouraged religious non-conformity, principally Quakerism.

A Quaker community was established in Sowerby Row by 1725 and the sparseness of parochial records may be explained by non-conformist religious expression (Martin 2012, 7-9).

The tithe map (figure 4) illustrating the parish of Skelton was completed by 1840. This document depicts the study building as being extant and probably comprising the barn and the bothy on account of an extant small outbuilding being in very close proximity to the bothy and barn suite of buildings. The road to Skelton remained incomplete, access appearing to be from Sowerby Row immediately westwards.

The study building was situated within Plot 807 (figure 4) measuring one acre, 1 rod and 3 perches and having a taxable rate of two shillings in lieu of tithes, commuted to cash payments. The landowner was credited within the Indenture as being Wells Fletcher and was occupied by Stephen Mounsey.



Figure 4. Tithe map of 1840 showing the study building

Mounsey occupied eleven plots 807-817 forming a farm of around forty acres. This farm comprised of approximately twelve acres of arable land, ten acres of meadow, eight acres of pasture, six acres of woodland and two acres of buildings, a farm unit that R.W.Brunskill would classify as small (Brunskill 2002, 100) .

The First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1868 (figure 5) depicts the building with appendages on the north-western side of the barn and smaller adjuncts on the opposite elevations.

The two appendages on the north-western side may represent a porch into the barn subsequently lost, whilst the smaller adjuncts are probably stepped horse mounts, of which one example is still extant. The external steps into the first floor bothy do not appear on this plan.

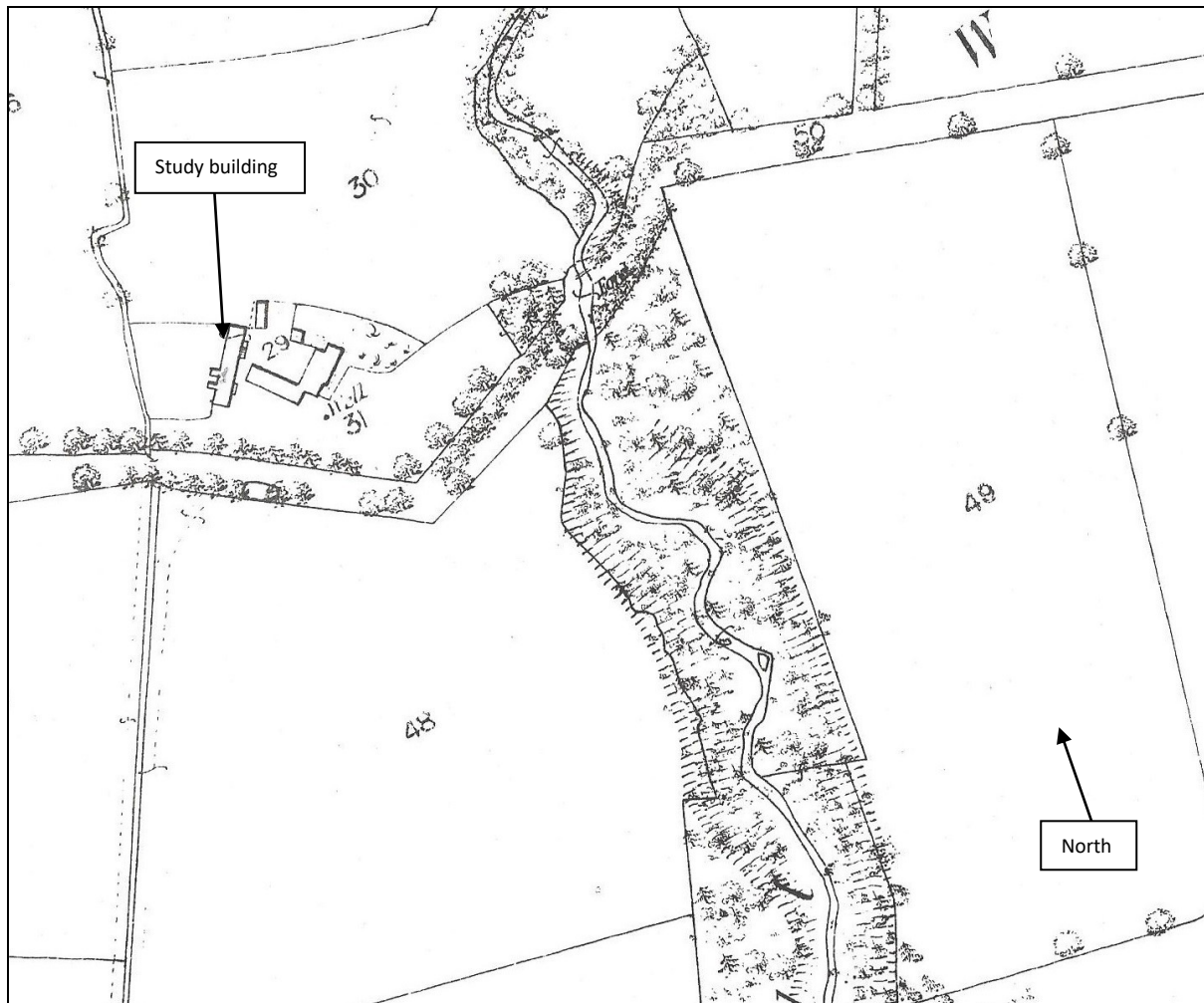


Figure 5. Location of the study building on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map 1868

5. ***SURVEY RESULTS***

5.1 **Methodology**

The buildings in the study area were surveyed on July 22nd 2013 by Gerry Martin including the use of tapes, a Laser Distance Measurement device and hand-held GPS equipment.

The buildings were fully accessible, although natural light was restricted within the study building, requiring occasional flash photography.

The survey comprised of scaled photographic recording of the interiors and elevations of all the buildings, with detailed photography of any worthy architectural elements.

Notations were undertaken regarding the characteristics of these farm buildings, including metrical data, thresholds, materials and building techniques employed.

The corpus of the report is formed from these notes and photographs.

For ease of understanding, the nomenclature “north” refers to the wall or side that is primarily facing north. In reality it has a north-western alignment. The other three compass points use similar nomenclature.

The following report describes the study building that was divided into four units.

5.2 Ground floor internal lay-out

The stone barn (NY 40550 38525) was rectangular in plan, aligned northeast-southwest and measured 28m x 6.10m and consisted of four units: Barn, Stable, Store and Bothy (figure 6).

The contiguous building stood to a wall height of between 3.30m and 5.00m, the roof-ridge comprising corrugated asbestos sheets being between 5.70m and 8.30m above the ground.

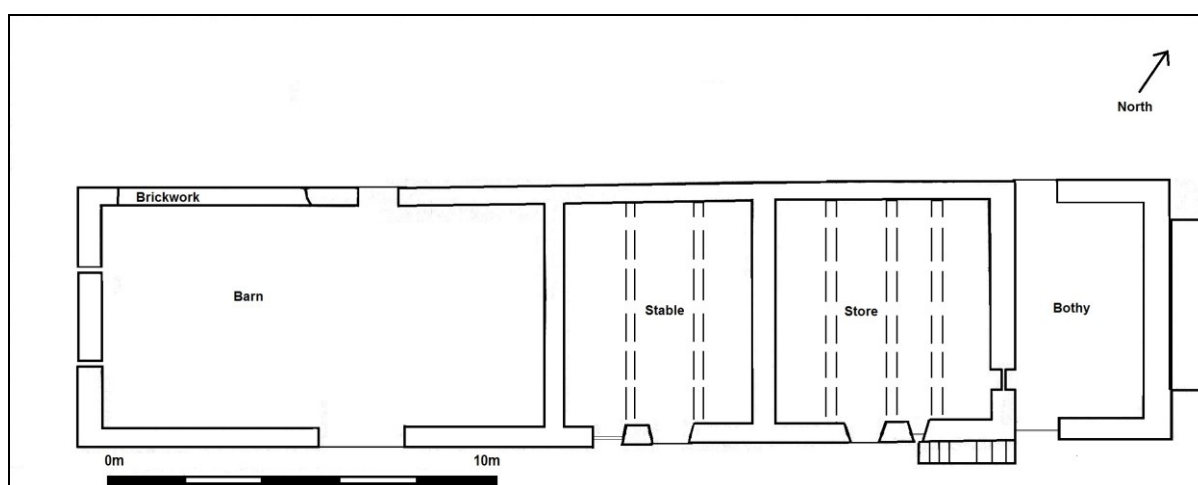


Figure 6. Floor plan of stone barn

Barn

The barn measured 7.95m x 5.26m and stood to a height of 5.65m with walls 0.60m in thickness on the southern side.

The floor was earthen and rather uneven declining towards the east.

The interior walls had not been treated leaving a surface of rough, rubble-stone bonded by a lime mortar (figure 7). The principal ingress appeared to be from the south-west with a large door 2.40m in width.

The barn was supported by four hand-made wooden roof trusses that rested on slight stone buttresses built into the stone fabric (figure 7).

Repairs to the building fabric consisted of a modern brick wall that extended from the western gable almost to a small door (figure 6).

A coarse rubble-stone partition wall between the barn and the stable stood to a height of 2.00m and formed a loft above the stable (figure 8). The partition wall was not keyed into the shell of the building and appears to indicate a revised spatial arrangement within the barn.

A fifth timber roof truss had replaced an earlier support at the eastern end of the barn (figure 8).



Figure 7. Interior of the Barn



Figure 8. Interior of the Barn with partition wall

Stable

The stable measured 5.00m x 5.26m and stood to a height of 2.47m with walls 0.60m in thickness on the southern side.

The stable possessed a recent concrete floor with a modern timber ceiling formed from floor joists. The walls were all white-washed.

Formerly, three stalls were arranged along the northern wall fed by chutes from above that delivered the hay (figure 9).

The walls were white-washed whilst two central steel supports were added approximately ten years ago.

A small cupboard (18) measuring 0.30m in height, 0.28m in width and 0.32m in depth was surmounted by a timber lintel and set into the eastern wall (figure 10).



Figure 9. Interior of stable



Figure 10. Cupboard (18)

Store

The store measured 5.55m x 5.17m and stood to a height of 2.30m with walls 0.60m in thickness on the southern side.



Figure 11. Store interior



Figure 12. Cupboard (19)

The floor of the store was recently surfaced in concrete, whilst the rubble-stone walls were largely white-washed (figure 11).

The ceiling was formed from modern timber joists and floorboards and divided an earlier ground surface and upper floor.

A small cupboard (19) measuring 0.41m in height, 0.38m in width and 0.37m in depth was surmounted by a timber lintel and set into the western wall (figure 12). This feature may have originally conjoined with cupboard (20) within the bothy.

Bothy

The bothy measured 3.39m x 5.44m and stood to a height of 2.33m formed from rubble-stone walls 0.45m in thickness.

The floor of the bothy was recently surfaced in concrete, accessed from two steps and a doorway on the northern long axis, whilst the rubble-stone walls were largely white-washed.

The western wall dividing a store and the bothy was originally the gable end of the original barn and appeared to be built on a plinth of large rubble-stones (figure 13) that projected out from the wall.

A cupboard (20) within this wall measured 0.42m in length, 0.41m in height and 0.40m in depth and appeared to conjoin with cupboard (19) in the store. Possibly this was a partially filled ground floor window belonging to the original building.

The ceiling was formed from modern timber joists and floorboards and divided the ground and first floor.

A ceramic sink was introduced into the ground floor of the bothy.



Figure 13. Stone plinth within the bothy



Figure 14. Dormitory above the store

5.3 Upper floor internal lay-out

The upper floors of both the barn and the stable formed a single, unified open space. The area above the stable was used as a hayloft (figure 15).

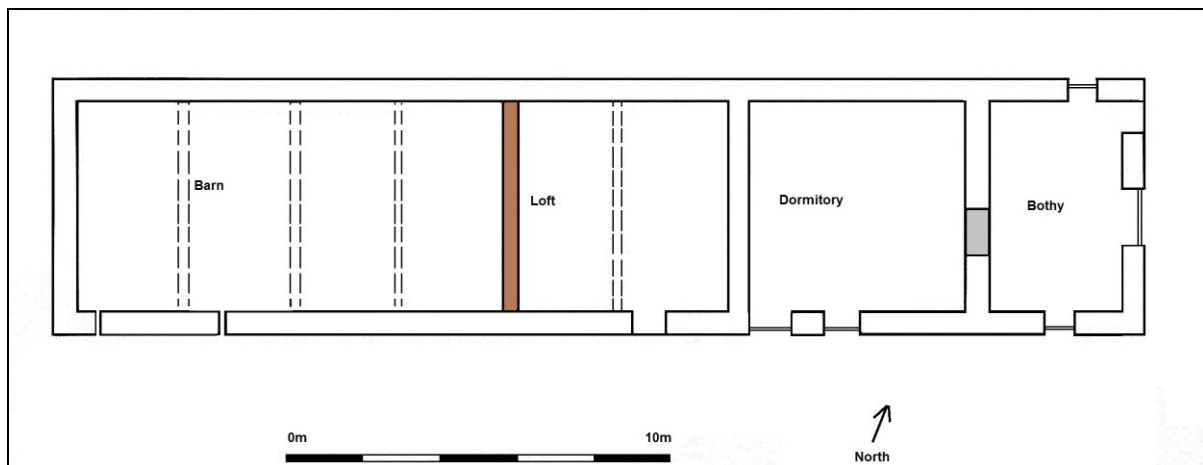


Figure 15. Floor plan of the upper storey

Dormitory

The dormitory measured 5.55m x 5.17m and was open to the roof a maximum height of 3.50m. All four walls were rendered in a pinkish, white plaster forming panels that had been subject to considerable graffiti in the past (figure 14).

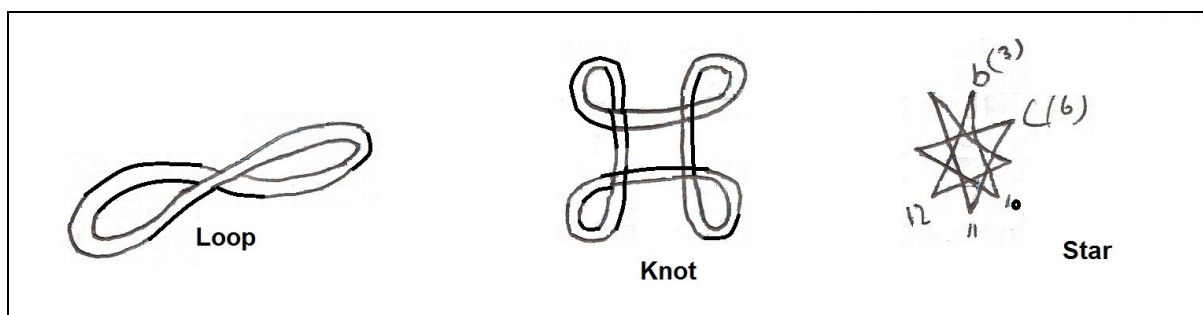


Figure 16. Popular motifs found on the plastered walls



Figure 17. Western panel bearing graffiti

The graffiti was hard to discern due to a combination of erratic handwriting, poor light, poor definition and uncertain subject matter (figure 17). Its authenticity and provenance based on contemporary handwriting style appear to be genuine, while under close scrutiny, certain patterns began to emerge that formed the following narrative.

The earliest inscriptions, circa 1814-1839

The plasterwork was probably executed *circa* 1814 as the earliest discernible inscription was a probable name and the date *May 6 1814*.

The panels were blank allowing the artist to “tag” their signature with a date in an expansive manner, the various inscriptions being perhaps 0.60m in length and 0.40m in height.

The copperplate handwriting was probably executed by a red-brown wax “crayon” that had a width of approximately 5mm. The “crayon” almost certainly was a stick of sealing wax as wax crayons were not marketed until the late 19th century.

Recognisable dates were; *Feb 17th 1815*, *Feb 19th 1815* and *A 23rd 1839*.

The second major element comprised geometric motifs that frequently re-occurred (figure 16).

- The simplest motif was a loop of which there were at least four examples.
- A sophisticated “knot” occurred at least three times.

- Variations on an irregular shaped star and in one case had numbers or letters at each terminal.

Placing too much emphasis on meaning could lead to misinterpretation but the perpetrators must have been literate in order to write their names.

Ownership of place may have been one motivation, but possibly these crude drawings possessed didactic value.

The loop and knot may have been visual aids to teach labourers types of knot and how to tie a knot by following a continuous thread on the drawing.

The star is intriguing but the location on the northern wall may have been vital if it was used as an *ad hoc* sundial.

The graffiti appears to have been initiated around the time of the Napoleonic War when there was a minor agricultural boom. Time pieces were expensive and used almost exclusively for navigation in order to calculate longitude. There was only local solar time; National or Greenwich Mean Time emerging with the advent of the railways.

The calculation of local solar time was largely obtained using sundials, the gnomon casting a shadow that could be calibrated to a notch or marker that represented a specific time.

If a bar was casting a shadow through a window in the room, could it have been possible that the shadow was utilised to tell the time?

Alternatively, could this symbol be a derivation of a Quaker Cross? Some religious texts also appear on two walls but unfortunately only occasional words could be understood.

Only one pictorial drawing was identified on the southern wall. Although rather unclear it appears to show an adult man wearing a stove-pipe hat, a fashion which reached its zenith by the 1840s and 1850s.

Etchings and engravings, mid-19th century

The use of the red wax “crayon” virtually occupied all the available space on the panel leaving subsequent “artists” having to work within existing graffiti.

Once again tagging names appears to have been popular but the method employed was to engrave or etch the name into the plaster in the style of Roman or antique type-faces, current during the mid-19th century.

These examples of graffiti were particularly hard to discern and would require brass rubbings to be fully understood.

Pencil graffiti, early 20th century

By the late 19th century mass production of cheap pencils provided the most common form of writing implement.

A number of tags were identified comprising name and address and sometimes date. Robert Waite made two entries with the tag, *"Robert Waite, Harrison Farm, Upperby, Carlisle, England 1924"*.

As with the mid-19th century etched graffiti, the purpose of this action was casual ownership of the space and served no other didactic purpose.

Bothy

The upstairs area of the bothy measured 3.39m x 5.44m and was open to the roof, a height of approximately 4.00m.

The walls had been left untreated exposing rubble-stone walls. The interior had been renovated and was in good condition complete with a wooden floor.

The western wall formed from randomly coursed rubble-stone represented the former gable end of the barn.

Within this wall was an offset, filled window measuring 1.06m in width and 1.20m in height (figure 18). This window was clearly visible in the adjacent dormitory.



Figure 18. Filled window within bothy



Figure 19. Steps leading into the bothy

5.4 Eastern elevation

The eastern gable was formed from rubble-stone to form a wall 0.45m in thickness and measured 6.10m in width and stood to a height of 8.20m. The elevation was complemented by dressed sandstone quoins measuring between 0.30-0.60m in length and between 0.25-0.30m in thickness (figure 20).

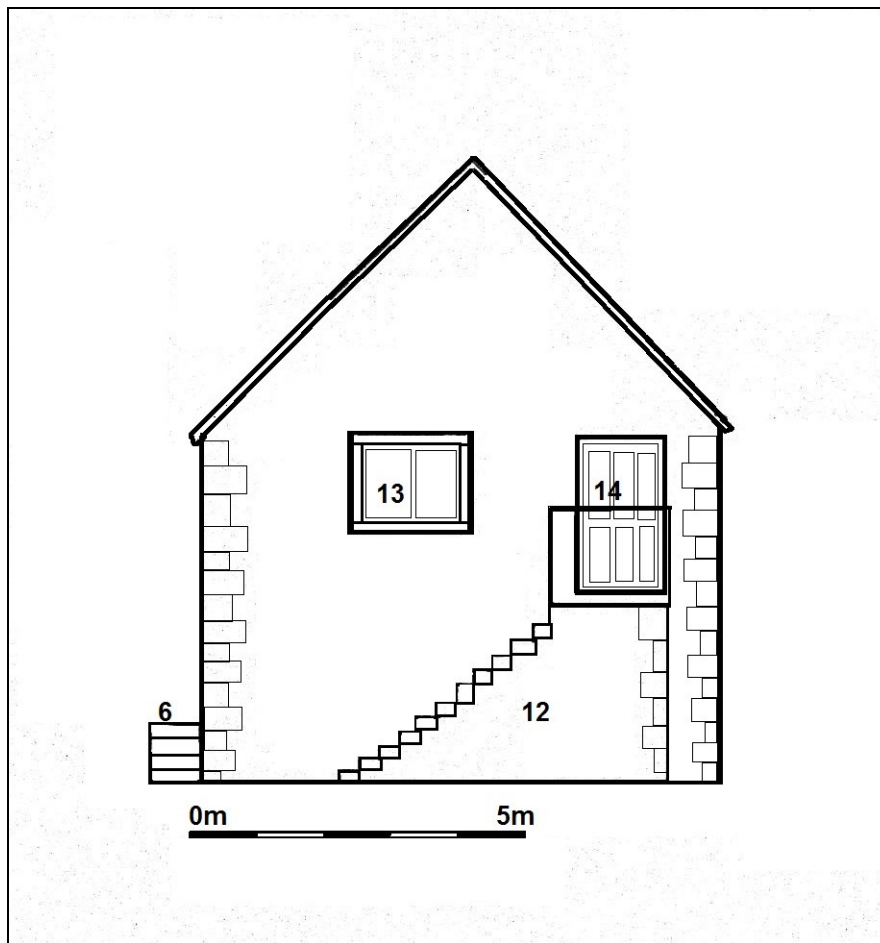


Figure 20. Eastern elevation of stone barn



Figure 21. Steps (12) into the bothy



Figure 22. Window (13)

Three architectural features were visible within the façade.

- The upper storey was reached by a flight of fourteen stone steps (figure 19), 1.10m in length and approximately 0.20m in thickness. These steps (12) formed a rectangular appendage 3.86m in length and 2.16m in height surmounted by a metal rail (figure 21). These steps were added after 1868 as they do not appear on the first edition Ordnance Survey map.

- A window (13) measuring 1.45m x 1.25m in height filled the upper storey to the bothy. It possessed a red sandstone surround but the window casement was a modern replacement (figure 22).
- The bothy was entered through a wooden door (14) measuring 1.00m in width and 1.98m in height. The door was modern but distressed comprising twin panes and double wooden panels. The door was within a red sandstone surround formed from stone quoins (figure 20).

5.5 Southern elevation

The southern elevation (figure 23) measured 28.00m in length and was up to 8.20m in height and comprised two major structural phases.

The earliest phase was the central part of the barn formed from rubble-stone walls (figure 25) measuring 0.60m in thickness and finished with red sandstone quoins at each gable end. The quoins forming the façade were approximately 0.56m x 0.30m x 0.29m in size and hand finished.

There is some suggestion that the western part of the elevation was also extended west of door (1). This part of the building fabric was built on a plinth of large boulders that slightly projected (figure 24). The elevation contained two ventilation slits measuring 0.40m x 0.10m (figure 24).

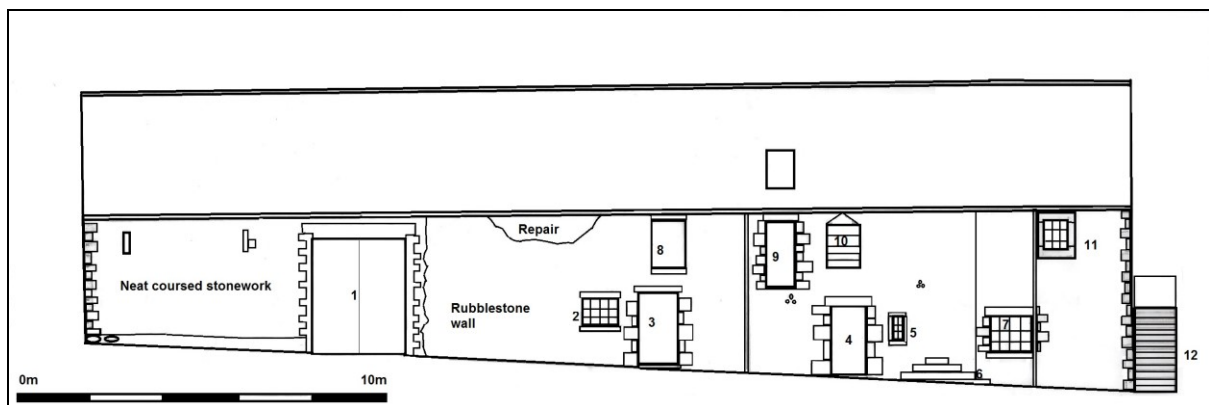


Figure 23. Southern elevation of the barn



Figure 24. Western end of southern elevation



Figure 25. Central area of southern elevation

The latest phase was the addition of a stone bothy at the eastern end with walls measuring 0.45m in thickness (figure 26).

The roof had been replaced in corrugated asbestos sheet with one modern skylight.

The elevation was in a generally good state of repair with the plastic guttering working. Part of the central stonework just below the roof-line had been repaired and repointed (figure 25).



Figure 26. Eastern end of southern elevation



Figure 27. Door (1)

Eleven architectural features were visible within the façade.

- Door (1) led into the barn. It was a relatively modern Tongue-and-Grooved wooden double-door measuring 2.50m in width and 3.00m in height. The door was surmounted by a replacement concrete lintel, whilst the surround was replaced in light grey brick produced during the mid to later 20th century (figure 27).
- Window (2) lit the stable. It measured 0.88m x 0.81m in height and consisted of twelve panes of glass 0.18m x 0.22m within a timber frame. The surround was replaced in concrete (figure 28).
- Access into the stable was through a relatively modern Tongue-and-Grooved wooden Dutch door (3), [sometimes known as a stable door], measuring 1.00m x 1.98m in height. The door surround was formed from a red sandstone step, dressed stone quoins and a stone lintel. Within the surround was a slight rebate 0.03m in depth that accommodated a former external door secured by lead-filled mounts for bolts and hinges (figure 37).
- Access into the store was through a relatively modern Tongue-and-Grooved wooden Dutch door (4), measuring 0.90m x 1.84m in height. The door surround (figure 23) was formed from a red sandstone step, dressed stone quoins larger than in door (3) and a stone lintel with a second timber lintel inside the building.
- Window (5) provided light into the store. The window (figure 29) measured 0.30m x 0.64m in height and contained six glazed panes measuring 0.13m x 0.17m within a timber frame. The stone surround possessed a rebate 0.08m into the light, a groove that formerly served as a possible glazing bar.
- Steps (6) butted the building and were used for mounting horses. This set of steps (figure 30) measured 0.78m in height, 2.14m in length and 0.65m in width and was formed from

squared sandstone blocks. The feature is illustrated on the 1868 Ordnance Survey map but is absent from the 1840 tithe map.

- Window (7) served the ground floor of the bothy. It measured 1.00m x 1.01m in height. The timber casement was a replacement, glazed with twelve small glass panes measuring 0.21m x 0.29m. The exterior surround comprised neatly dressed red sandstone jambs except where it utilised the existing sandstone quoins from the corner of the original stone barn.



Figure 28. Window (2)



Figure 29. Window (5)



Figure 30. Steps (6)



Figure 31. Window (7)



Figure 32. Loft door (8)



Figure 33. Door (9)

- Loft door (8) accessed the space above the stable. It measured 0.90m x 1.10m and consisted of a relatively modern Tongue-and-Grooved wooden door. No formal surround existed and it appears probable that this feature was enlarged from a former window (figure 32).
- Door (9) accessed the dormitory and measured 1.00m x 1.70m. It comprised a relatively modern Tongue-and-Grooved wooden door sitting within a formal surround consisting of stone quoins (figure 33).
- Dovecote (10) was a modern addition (figure 34) filling a former window measuring 0.70m x 0.90m (figure 35) servicing the dormitory.
- Window (11) measured 0.70m x 0.90m in height and lit the upper floor of the bothy. It possessed an interior timber lintel whilst the window frame was modern. The exterior red sandstone surround was machine-sawn (figure 36).



Figure 34. Former window now a dovecote (10) Figure 35. Interior of former window (10)



Figure 36. Window (11)



Figure 37. Door (3)

5.6 Northern elevation

The northern elevation (figure 38) measured 28.00m in length and was up to 8.00m in height and comprised two major structural phases; the stone barn and the bothy described above. Both ends of the elevation were framed by stone quoins.

A lean-to adopted as a dairy formerly butted the stone barn. A cement render 1.82m in height denoted the vertical limit of the milking area, whilst a circular iron plate 0.33m in diameter indicated a substantial reinforcing bar.

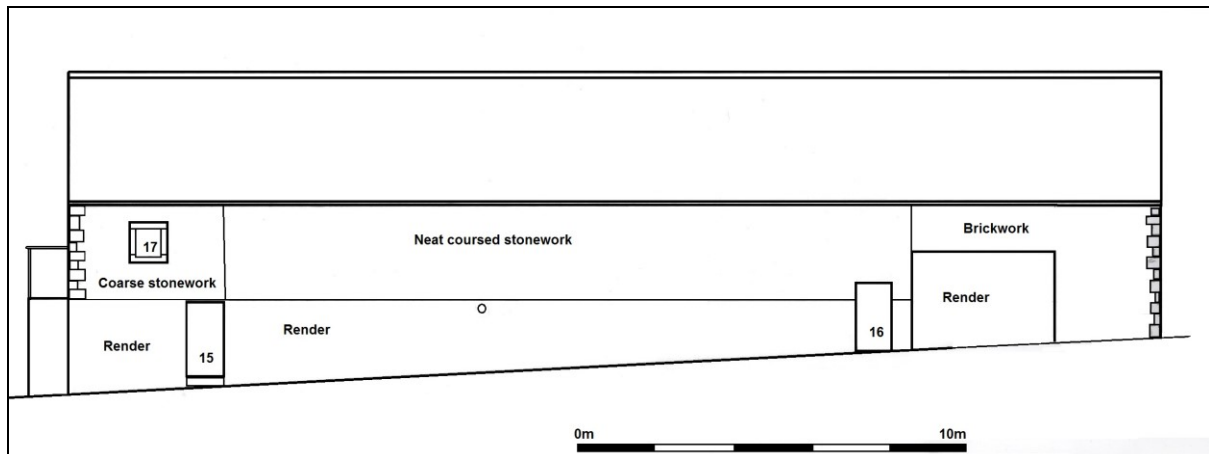


Figure 38. Northern elevation of stone barn

The stonework beside the bothy was coarse (figure 39), whereas the remainder of the building was formed from tightly bonded stone blocks, neatly pointed with a rough relief (figure 40). This style is not in keeping with the southern elevation and probably represents a refurbishment of the northern elevation, quite possibly at the same time as the erection of an adjacent replacement stone barn built in 1902 and which depicts a similar late Victorian taste in masonry.

A modern repair at the western end of the elevation was formed from red bricks (figure 41).



Figures 39-41. Eastern, central and western ends of the northern elevation

Three architectural features were visible within the façade.

- A 20th century sliding Tongue-and-Grooved door (15) measuring 1.00m x 1.84m in height that provided the ingress into the ground floor of the bothy (figure 42).

- A 20th century Tongue-and-Grooved door (16) measuring 1.00m x 1.80m in height that provided the ingress into the barn (figure 43). This doorway may have possessed a former purpose in order to create a draught into a threshing barn.
- An unglazed window (17) measuring 0.76m x 0.90m in height with complementary red sandstone surround that serviced the upper floor of the bothy. The uprights had a slightly bevelled internal frame creating a slight rebate (figure 44).



Figure 42. Door (15)



Figure 43. Door (16)



Figure 44. Window (17)



Figure 45. Western gable end

5.7 Western elevation

The western elevation measured 6.10m in width and 6.00m in height and was plain, finished in coarse rubble-stone with flanking stone quoins (figure 46). A plinth of coarse stones appeared to support the building fabric.

Approximately 1.16m above ground level were two ventilation slits measuring 0.06m x 0.52m in height and an owl-hole complete with ledge just below the apex of the roof (figure 45).

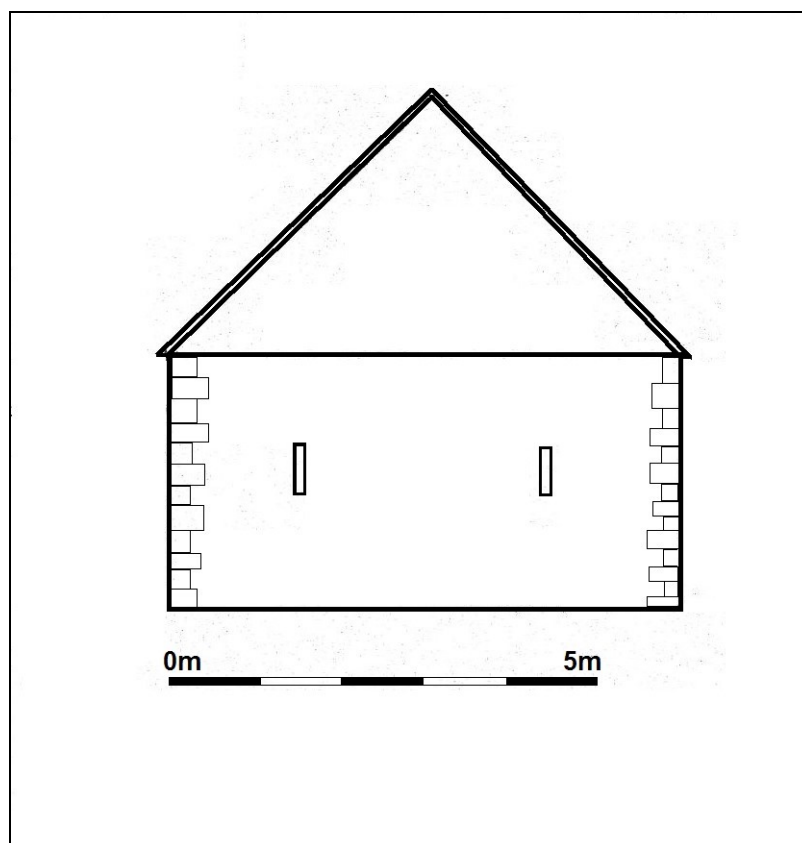


Figure 46. West elevation

6. DISCUSSION

6.1 Academic merit

Past cultural settlement in Cumbria has been predominantly rural, where agriculture has been the main economic driver and product. Increasingly, those features associated with past farming technique have been lost or converted for domestic use or for local tourism. Moreover, neglect has also contributed to a loss of building stock.

Oral traditions, rural customs and lore has also diminished as a consequence of changing farm practice, social mobility and rural depopulation.

A challenge to historians, archaeologists and other researchers is to compile a record of those rural buildings and customs that reflected past agricultural practice and social conditions before their industrial, agricultural and historic context is lost.

6.2 Phasing

The stone barn consisted of three principal phases (figure 47).

1. The earliest phase (grey outline) formed the original building and included a probable threshing barn and store with overhead temporary accommodation.
2. The barn may have either been rebuilt or extended (green outline) that increased the floor area. The introduction of a partition wall (blue outline) divided the barn creating a space for a stable.

3. A bothy (brown outline) was attached to the eastern end of the original barn with a flight of steps added later.

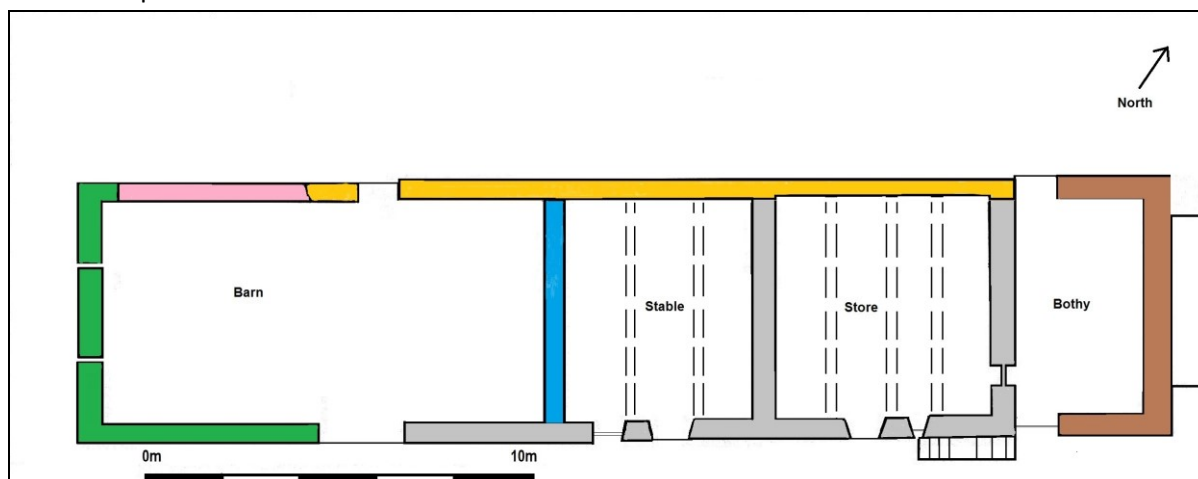


Figure 47. Phase plan of the barn complex

The north elevation appears to have been renovated and repointed (yellow outline) probably *circa* 1902, whilst a later further renovation occurred when a brick wall (pink outline) was introduced.

6.3 Discussion

The study building possessed few architectural embellishments, primarily constructed for an agricultural purpose and probably serving as a threshing barn with a hayloft with additional facilities for stabling and accommodation.

The stone barn was illustrated on the 1840 Tithe Survey and the 1868 Ordnance Survey map.

Graffiti within the dormitory appears to reliably date to *circa* 1814 suggesting that the barn was probably extant around 1800.

The lack of any chimney or hearths precludes use as a permanent dwelling, albeit the upper storey was probably utilised for seasonal, itinerant and casual labour.

At the base of the stone-work on the southern and western elevations were some large rounded stone boulders, out of keeping with the regular face of the barn. Possibly, these stones were the remnant stone plinths or pad-stones for an earlier barn that could have been a timber structure with cruck blades. However, the stone quarry, presumably the source of the building stone was approximately one mile away, whilst the adjacent farmhouse built in 1731 was constructed in stone.

The barn was designed for the storage and conversion of grain. The crop was first stored and during the winter winnowed, the threshed grain then transported to a mill or fed to cattle. It appears to belong to a period of investment in farm buildings initiated during the later 18th Century that lasted to about 1880.

This period of agricultural improvement reflected three distinct phases:

- The second half of the 18th Century when demand increased from industrialising communities and transport improvements facilitated long distance trade

- The Napoleonic War 1793-1815, when there was nationally, a large rise in agricultural production and where protectionism maintained high prices
- 1815-1880 when increased mechanisation and scientific methods increased the efficiency of the Cumbrian farm (Brunskill 2002, 27-28)

Development was enhanced by the effects of enclosure that rationalised farm holdings and scientific improvements in farming that lead to greater productivity and efficiency. This improvement was reflected in the farm buildings where simple forms developed into specialised structures, culminating in designs of some ingenuity with architectural pretensions and at a considerable cost (Brunskill 2002, 95).

By the late 19th Century and during the 20th Century, Dutch barns, silage pits and on-site storage made specialised storage buildings superfluous.

The stone barn at Rushgill House probably belongs to the second phase of agricultural improvement (1793-1815) and would have been used for winnowing grain, stabling and temporary accommodation for farm labourers. Most probably the barn was constructed around 1800 due to the presence of dateable graffiti (1815); its later presence confirmed on both the tithe (1840) and First Edition Ordnance Survey map (1868).

The spatial lay-out at Rushgill House appears to conform to a derivation of Brunskill's L-shaped arrangement with the farmhouse and the outbuildings articulated as separate entities (Ibid 103). The complex at Rushgill House comprised a separate farmhouse and a separate barn with threshing floor, stable and loft over. A common roof covered the range of two storeys and the building was constructed as a single event. These characteristics all resemble the model for a small Cumbrian farm of 30 acres (12.15 ha) plus fell grazing (Ibid 100).

According to the tithe indenture of 1840, the owner Stephen Mounsey farmed approximately 40 acres, a farm size that would by this juncture be classified as small.

Of particular academic interest is the presence of graffiti within a room that was rendered with plaster, indicative of extra expense and consequently was probably not an agricultural building.

This room could only be reached via an internal ladder or external steps through door (10). Mr Donoghue (*pers comm*) mentioned that a great number of pews, forms and tables were removed relatively recently from this area.

Permanent residence would have meant that the walls would have been decorated and the graffiti lost under paint or wallpaper. However, there appears a strong case that the room was used intermittently between 1814 and 1924 perhaps as casual accommodation or as a welfare or meeting room.

The presence of graffiti clearly indicates literacy on the part of the writer and that the written word or motifs was to be understood by the reader.

The room when in use as a casual dormitory may have served two possible functions, either religious or educational.

As stated earlier, deciphering and thereby interpreting the graffiti is particularly difficult. The area around Sowerby Row appears to have had a religious heritage of Quakerism (Martin 2012, 8-9), synonymous with egalitarianism and equality. The faith place great emphasis on teaching, individual engagement and reject religious symbolism and theatre. Meeting Houses display both modesty and simplicity in order to communicate the Message. Therefore, this space may be in keeping with early 19th century religious non-conformity where the congregation met in such unconventional venues.

The evidence for this assertion is circumstantial based on some incomplete and indecipherable religious texts and that the star motif could be an early version of the Quaker Cross, a symbol that was not widely seen until the 1870-71 Franco-Prussian War.

www.hisculturalchristian.blogspot.co.uk/2009/11/quaker-cross-symbol-for-compassion.html

The case for an educational role occurring is inferred from the knot and loop motifs that could represent the tying of knots, a skill that would have been vital in pre-industrial farming. Teaching these manifold skills and techniques would have been an oral tradition leaving little if any documented footprint. Possibly, pictorial sketches assisted the transfer of this knowledge.

The presence of snatches of verse also challenges the presumed lack of literacy within the agricultural labouring class. However, the ability to read the bible, (as apart from dissemination through a priest) was a central tenet of religious non-conformity such as Quakerism. It is conceivable that the standard of literacy was higher than the contemporary norm.

The presence of the graffiti was an unexpected surprise and the report has dwelt on this discovery longer than is necessary within the terms of the brief as the graffiti has the potential to be of considerable interest in understanding rural social history on the cusp of the Industrial Age.

The graffiti is of considerable academic merit as this form of documentary expression is very rare. In order to understand these panels further, they would need detailed photography using a long exposure. Brass rubbings would also reveal engraved or etched graffiti. If the opportunity does arise in the future, the context and content of this graffiti assemblage may be better understood.

7 ARCHIVE

The archive for this project will be deposited with the appropriate curator, Tullie House, Carlisle. This archive has been assembled in accordance within the protocols of Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2).

The report will be filed with the online *Oasis* archive of archaeological grey literature.

8 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

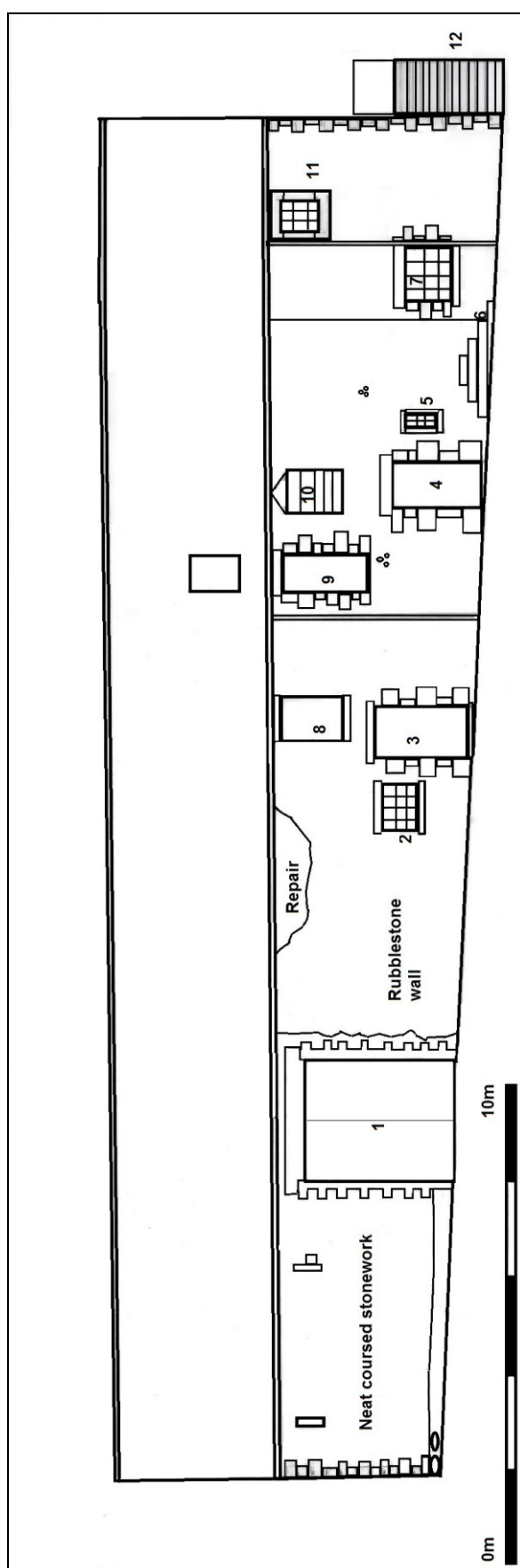
I am grateful to Mr Patrick Donoghue for his assistance on the history of the barn and commissioning the work.

I would also like to thank the staff of Carlisle Library with my research into the local history of the area and the staff of Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle with the map regression and other documentary research.

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Appendix A: Southern elevation



Appendix B: Northern elevation

